

**MINUTES OF THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
J. MARTIN GRIESEL ROOM**

September 17, 2004
9:00 A.M.

PRESENT: *Appointed Members:*

Don Mooney, Terry Hankner, Caleb Faux, Jim Tarbell, Jacqueline McCray
and Valerie Lemmie

Community Development and Planning Staff:

Skip Forwood, Virginia Vornhagen, Katherine Keough-Jurs, Caroline
Kellam, Rodney Ringer and Mark Jones

Law Department:

Julia Carney

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Mooney called the meeting to order.

MINUTES

Minutes for the previous meeting were not yet available for review.

CONSENT ITEMS

ITEM #1 – an Ordinance authorizing the grant of a permanent easement within the right-of-way of Apple Hill Road to Diane H. and James R. Greiss, Jr.

Motion: Ms. Hankner moved approval of Consent Items
Second: Mr. Faux
Vote: All ayes (5-0), motion carries.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

ITEM #2 – a Report and Recommendation on an emergency ordinance authorizing the sale of surplus City-owned property located at 852 Lincoln Avenue in Walnut Hills.

Rodney Ringer (Staff Planner) presented this item. He noted that the property is within the City's Lincoln-Melrose Walnut Hills Historic District. Staff supported the sale of the property for its appraised value of \$218,000. Mr. Ringer said that several City-owned houses on the block have been for sale for rehabilitation, but was unaware of a settlement date for 852.

Motion: Ms. McCray moved approval
Second: Ms. Hankner
Vote: All ayes (5-0), motion carries.

ITEM #3 -- Katherine Keough-Jurs (Staff Planner) presented this item. The University Village Association and the Corryville Community Council requested this Plan in 2001. The boundaries of the study area extend that of the 1993 Plan and supersede that Plan.

Mark Jones of the Department of Community Development and Planning summarized the planning process and explained the high level of public participation as evidenced by the diversity of the Plan's Steering Committee. He said that through all meetings held during this planning process he has heard the same needs expressed by many groups including local residents; area businesses, i.e., Kroger, Clear Channel, the Health Alliance; University of Cincinnati administration; Cincinnati Public Schools administration; the Community Council, and the University Village Association.

MS. LEMMIE ARRIVED.

Clete Benken of Kinzelman Kline Gossman, planning consultants, presented the major recommendations of the plan.

He brought several items to the attention of the Commission:

1. Need to increase safety,
2. Need to increase retail, dining and a variety of businesses, and a
3. Stronger relationship with the surrounding property owners and business owners.

He said he had been part of meetings held in the area at Fat Cats and Bogart's with area businesses and property owners. Items of special interest include:

1. Alteration of transportation,
2. Strategic tenanting,
3. Convenience for local patrons (pedestrian friendly), and
4. Return to access from high traffic thoroughfares.

In the 1960's the University Plaza and the Kroger supermarket were constructed, cutting off street access to short Vine Street. Poor access and insufficient parking caused a decrease in business activity and encouraged crime. The problems addressed in the 1993 Plan are still unresolved.

Some of the keys to revitalization would be to:

1. Make significant changes,
2. Make safety a high priority,
3. Increase regular traffic to support businesses and discourage loitering,
4. Prepare a market study in which the UC students and hospitals are a consideration, using the success of the Ludlow NBD as somewhat of a guide.

Key recommendations include:

1. Preservation of the ambiance of short Vine,
2. Redevelopment of University Plaza and improved pedestrian access (streets and intersections),
3. Promotion of re-investment, redevelopment of housing to higher densities while respecting scale, and
4. Focus on development of the community for the long-term future, no ad hoc.

Dan Schimburg, President of the Community Council, spoke about the serious decline of the short Vine area. He cited the dreadful increase in crime and a serious drop in owner-occupied housing in the area. He felt the construction of University Plaza cut off short Vine from access to other high traffic thoroughfares and thus from potential customers. He spoke in favor of the Urban Renewal Plan and also encouraged the Commission to accept it. He also mentioned the increasing interest and enthusiasm shown by stakeholders and area businesses.

Maureen Mello, President of the Corryville Economic Development Corporation (CEDC) has been a member of CEDC for seven years, and an area business owner for the past 20 years. The business owners are in agreement with the neighborhood groups in noting the decline of the Corryville area since the 1980s, and that drastic change is necessary. She finds the Urban Renewal Plan the most positive way to make that change and encouraged the Commission to accept it.

Scott Enns representing the University of Cincinnati and the Uptown Consortium, both of which support the Renewal Plan. He said that by 2021, the University would have at least 5,000 additional students. They will be older and thus have higher expectations for housing and quality of life. He said that in order for the area to change it would require the cooperation of all parties, from the owner of University Plaza to area residents and business owners, to the Health Alliance and OKI. He encouraged the Commission to accept the draft Plan and urged them to move forward when it is time to adopt the Final Plan.

Ann Moss, who has lived on Euclid Avenue as a homeowner for 20 years, just recently learned that the Plan called for her property to be razed. She asked what could be done to ensure the welfare of the present property owners. She expressed concern that the area has deteriorated in recent years and needs to become more livable.

Kay Weeks of 2620 Euclid Avenue blamed the problem, in part, on unruly University students, with little or no controls being enforced. She does support the Plan with the exception of use of eminent domain. She noted that Item 25 of the Plan should be corrected to Euclid, not Eden.

Bobi Jackson, representing the Friars Club Neighborhood Family Resource Center, said that the Plan will be a catalyst in bringing unity to Corryville and therefore she is in support of it. She said the senior residents have indicated their concern about the roughness of younger people that keeps them away from the shops in the area.

Dan Plofehan of 2617 Eden Avenue is the Treasurer and past President of the Corryville Community Council. He said that the Corryville Family Day, which includes a gospel festival and clean up, have brought a sense of pride and community to the neighborhood. Other efforts are needed. He supports the Plan if the needs of the long-standing residents were considered.

Ms. Lemmie asked that all those who have made presentations put their comments in writing to Margaret Wuerstle, Chief Planner to be forwarded to the Planning Commission and City Council.

Motion:	Mr. Tarbell moved to approval to accept the draft Urban Renewal Plan.
Second:	Ms. Lemmie
Vote:	All ayes (6-0), motion carries.

ITEM #4 – Caroline Kellam (staff planner) presented this item. City-County land transactions: Paddock Park/ Mill creek Psychiatric Center Drake Hospital, Eggleston and Reading Parking Lot (B&B) and Hillcrest Center based on an emergency ordinance authorizing the City Manager to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Board of County Commissioners of Hamilton County,

Ohio (County) regarding ownership, disposition, and use of certain parcels of real estate described in the MOU. Staff recommends the transfer.

Ms. Lemmie noted that this transfer is part of an agreement to settle a \$300,000 lawsuit between the City and the County.

Mr. Robert Chavez of 250 W. Court St. had an issue regarding the plot at Eggleston and Reading, a triangular piece of land next to Broadway Commons. The Chavez family, with partners, owns the 25 acres which makes up Broadway Commons. Recently, the expansion of the Justice Center that was proposed 15 years ago has been in the papers. A number of independent plans were developed for this property, the best known, was the new professional baseball stadium in this area. It was not approved. The Convention Center expansion was also proposed for this area. The possibility of the County using this space for an addition to the county holding cells or as an office building is very real. His concern for this development is that this type of use would virtually cut off any connection with the downtown area and jeopardize his site. He felt that this triangle could be used as a public park with access from Central Parkway.

Mr. Tarbell had no problem agreeing to the other land transfers, but felt the Eggleston/Reading property should not be included.

Ms. Lemmie indicated that the County has promised to use this area for parking and that the City zoning code would limit any other plans the County may have.

Mr. Mooney was concerned that the County may not be subject to any City zoning ordinance. Mr. Mooney would prefer that the triangular site not be included in this transfer.

Mr. Faux was also hesitant to include the Eggleston property in this deal. He wanted an assurance that the County would not develop this property beyond using it for parking.

Bill Baum of 1429 Walnut Street, representing Urban Sites, a development company, was called to speak. Mr. Baum was involved in a number of downtown investments and could envision this area being a gateway with Eggleston, Reading and Central Parkway. He is now in the process of building at the corner of Broadway and Reading Road. Mr. Baum has invested \$2.5 million in three buildings and another \$3 million in two buildings he plans to renovate in the future.

Chris Frutkin of 1418 Main Street, a developer in the area of Over-the-Rhine, was called to speak. He felt that the Main Street business district is fading due to the County making a number of bad decisions on land use.

Both Mr. Mooney and Mr. Tarbell recalled that the American Society of Landscape Architects had presented a plan for development of a marketplace with housing at that site.

Mr. Tarbell requested an evaluation of the highest and best use for this property. He felt we should incorporate language that would guarantee the best use of the property.

Julia Carney of the Law Department pointed out that it would require a 2/3 vote for City Council to overturn the Planning Commission negative vote.

Scott Stiles, Assistant to the City Manager, relayed that the judge handling the lawsuit was waiting for the Millcreek part, which was included in this land transfer.

Ms. Lemmie made a motion to approve the land transaction as presented in the staff report.

Mr. Tarbell asked to postpone the vote until the next meeting to have time to consider this item with a report from staff on any existing plans. He also requested that the Community Council be notified.

Motion: Mr. Tarbell moved approval of postponement of Item #4
Second: Mr. Faux
No: Ms. Lemmie against
Vote: Ayes (5-1), motion carries.

Ms. Hankner asked to make it clear that it is just this piece of property that is holding up the vote.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to consider, the meeting was adjourned.

Motion: Mr. Faux motioned adjournment
Second: Ms. McCray
Vote: All ayes (6-0), motion carries.

Margaret A. Wuerstle, AICP
Chief Planner
Department of Community
Development & Planning

Donald Mooney, Chair
City Planning Commission

Date: _____

Date: _____